

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product, comprising a mold for molding a ceramic molded product, a screw extruder for supplying a ceramic material to the mold, and a filter unit for filtering the ceramic material at the an extrusion outlet of said screw extruder,

wherein said screw extruder has built therein a screw for kneading while moving the ceramic material forward, and has on ~~the~~ a front part thereof a spatula portion adapted to move over ~~the~~ an inlet surface of the filter unit with a predetermined interval between the spatula portion and the inlet surface, and

wherein the interval between said spatula portion and said inlet surface is in the range of 0.1 to 30 mm.

Claims 2-3. (Canceled).

4. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said spatula portion is so configured as to move while rotating over the inlet surface of the filter unit.

5. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to claim 4, wherein said spatula portion is extended from ~~the~~ a forward end of the screw and configured to rotate while moving with the screw.

6. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to claim 5, wherein said screw includes a lead portion arranged spirally around an axial member, the lead portion having ~~the~~ a forward end thereof forming the spatula portion.

7. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to claim 5, wherein said spatula portion is configured of a plurality of blades arranged on ~~the~~ a foremost axial portion extended from the forward end of the screw.

8. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to any one of claims ~~1 to 4~~ 4 to 7, wherein said spatula portion ~~preferably~~ has a tapered surface inclined in such a manner as to move away from the inlet surface progressively with respect to the direction of movement.

9. (currently amended) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to any one of claims ~~1 to 4~~ 4 to 8, wherein said ceramic molded product is a honeycomb structure.

10. (new) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to 1, wherein said spatula portion has a tapered surface inclined in such a manner as to move away from the inlet surface progressively with respect to the direction of movement.

11. (new) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to claim 1, wherein said ceramic molded product is a honeycomb structure.

12. (new) An extrusion molding apparatus for a ceramic molded product according to claim 1, wherein said ceramic material comprises a natural material.